

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A computer-implemented method of developing digital media content, comprising:
 - (a) providing a user interface to a digital device network, said interface configured to enable a user to contribute collaboratively online with other users in a collaborative community to modify a digital media artifact, wherein the digital media artifact comprises a story and wherein a plurality of competing derivative digital media artifacts are created by integrating one or more user contributions with the digital media artifact;
 - (b) creating a visual indicator to identify the user to other users in the collaborative community wherein the visual indicator protects the privacy of the user;
 - (c) establishing a deadline for user contributions to the online digital media artifact;
 - (d) determining a plurality of popularities of the plurality of derivative digital media artifacts derived from the digital media artifact;
 - (e) submitting a selected popular derivative digital media artifact received prior to the deadline for production by a third party into a final media product; and
 - (f) tracking a genealogy of the digital media artifact including a history of the digital media artifact and collaborative user contributions, wherein a percentage contribution by each users is calculated based at least in part on the number of story elements of the digital media artifact contributed by each user.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said third party is part of the collaborative community that participated in the creation of the digital media artifact.
3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said third party is not part of the collaborative community that participated in the creation of the digital media artifact.
4. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein popularity is determined by explicit or implicit voting by community members.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein popularity of a user contribution to the collaborative media artifact is determined implicitly by tracking viewing and/or use of the contribution by other users in the collaborative community.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein popularity of a user contribution to the collaborative media artifact is determined explicitly by tracking the assignment of a quality rating to the contribution by other users in the collaborative community.
7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the media product is one or more of an animation, television program, song, motion picture or commercial.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the media product is a special edition product.
9. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the user contributions include one or more of plots, characters, settings, situation, sound clips, drawings, artwork, and video clips.
10. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the user contributions are based on materials from a fixed-asset database.
11. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the user contributions include contributions to a working material asset database available to other members of the community.
12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein user contributions to a collaborative digital media artifact are tracked based on a genealogy algorithm.
13. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein modification history and percentage of contribution from multiple parties to the collaborative digital media artifact is graphically displayed.
14. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the users in the online collaborative community provide identity information in a user profile viewable by other members of the community.
15. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein user activity in the online collaborative community is tracked.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, wherein user activity is correlated with user profile data to determine demographic preferences.
17. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising providing an interface to a digital device network, said interface configured to enable a user to view a plurality of digital media artifacts collaboratively created by members of the online collaborative community, and to select from among the plurality of artifacts, one or more artifacts to modify.
18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the interface configured to enable a user to view a plurality of digital media artifacts collaboratively created by members of the online collaborative community uses statistical sampling to select the plurality of artifacts presented to the user from among a larger plurality of digital media artifacts collaboratively created by members of the online collaborative community.
19. (Canceled)
20. (Canceled)
21. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising combining a plurality of popular derivative digital media artifacts to create the selected popular derivative digital media artifact.
22. (Canceled)
23. (Currently amended) A computer-supported system for developing digital media content, said system comprising:
- (a) a network of digital devices configured to run software providing a user interface to the digital computer network, said interface configured to enable a user to contribute collaboratively online with other users to modify a digital media artifact, wherein the digital media artifact comprises a story and wherein a plurality of competing derivative digital media artifacts are created by integrating one or more user contributions with the digital media artifact, and wherein a visual indicator is created to identify the user to other users in the collaboration community wherein the visual indicator protects the privacy of the user; and
 - (b) a media production capability;

wherein said system is operated to determine a plurality of popularities of the plurality of derivative digital media artifacts derived from the digital media artifact; to submit a selected popular derivative digital media artifact prior to an established deadline for production into a final media product; and to track a genealogy of the digital media artifact including a history of the digital media artifact and collaborative user contributions, wherein a percentage contribution by each users is calculated based at least in part on the number of story elements of the digital media artifact contributed by each user..

24. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 23, wherein said network of digital devices comprises:

one or more clients running front-end software, said software providing a user interface to the digital computer network, said interface configured to enable a user to contribute collaboratively online with other users to modify a digital media artifact wherein a plurality of competing derivative digital media artifacts are created by integrating one or more user contributions with the digital media artifact;

one or more servers running back-end software, said software configured to interface with the front-end software to coordinate the contributions of a plurality of users;

one or more databases configured for storage of digital media and associated information; and

application program interfaces (APIs) and middleware (server-side software components) configured to communicate between the one or more clients, servers and databases.

25. (Original) The system of claim 23, wherein said digital device network comprises one or more of personal computers, interactive television devices, cable boxes, and cable modems.

26. (Original) The system of claim 25, wherein said digital device network further comprises one or more of wireless devices, cellular telephones and personal digital assistants.

27. (Canceled)

28. (Currently amended) A computer program product comprising a computer-usable medium having computer-readable program code embodied thereon relating to providing a computer-supported system for developing digital media content, the computer-readable program code effecting the following step within a computing system:

(a) providing a user interface to a digital device network, said interface configured to enable a user to contribute collaboratively online with other users to modify a digital media artifact, wherein the digital media artifact comprises a story and wherein a plurality of competing derivative digital media artifacts are created by integrating one or more user contributions with the digital media artifact;

(b) creating a visual indicator to identify the user to other users in the collaborative community wherein the visual indicator protects the privacy of the user;

(c) establishing a deadline for user contributions to the online digital media artifact;

(d) determining a plurality of popularities of the plurality of derivative digital media artifacts derived from the digital media artifact;

(e) submitting a selected popular derivative digital media artifact received prior to the deadline for production into a final media product; and

(f) tracking a genealogy of the digital media artifact including a history of the digital media artifact and collaborative user contributions, wherein a percentage contribution by each users is calculated based at least in part on the number of story elements of the digital media artifact contributed by each user.

29. (Canceled)